

Lautoka hosts sports event - Fiji Times Online

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A sporting initiative known as the "Mela Na Waqe" was held at the Natabua High School in Lautoka yesterday in the fight against diabetes and other non-communicable diseases.

The event was organised by FRIEND which is a non-government organisation in partnership with the Australian High Commission and Sports World.

Mela Na Waqe (Festival of Sports) is a combination of sports including mixed netball, mixed volleyball and tug of war.

The main event was the walk race while leisure games such as kite flying, sack race, marble race and tin-pani were also held.

FRIEND associate director Dr Jone Hawea said diabetes had reached a crisis point in Fiji.

"The clock is ticking on us as one in three people in Fiji have diabetes and every 12 hours there is a diabetic amputation," Dr Hawea said. "So we have to act now. The whole focus is to encourage outdoor activity and exercise for health.

"School children aged between six to 13 years partnered with elders to participate in the kite flying competition. Kite flying provides a platform for the younger children to engage in outdoor activities with their elders in learning kite making and kite flying skills.

"Our FRIEND SMILE team has been providing free medical care in the communities for the last four years combined with healthy eating and sporting activities to deal with the common risk factors."

There was also a traditional food festival where local foods were on sale.